



COUNTRY UPDATE  
**SOLOMON ISLANDS**  
November 2022



**PIRAS** is a collaboration between the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Australian Government that supports economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the Pacific.

Our target is to **benefit 20,000 households** across the Pacific countries of **Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.**

**Duration** 2021-2024

Learn more about PIRAS in the Pacific [here](#).

## What we do

The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility (PIRAS) supports COVID-19 food system and economic recovery by prioritizing food self-reliance, improving local nutrition and developing sustainable, equitable agricultural livelihood opportunities for rural communities.

In Solomon Islands, PIRAS works across 30 communities in the Western, Choiseul, Central provinces to support sustainable food production, to improve nutrition, and to strengthen inclusive local value chains by:

- ✓ Involving women and youth producer groups in the multiplication and distribution of local seed supply
- ✓ Training farmers and vulnerable households in seed production, soil improvement, food processing, value adding and marketing
- ✓ Supporting vulnerable mothers through nutrition awareness, and promotion of home gardens
- ✓ Facilitating partnerships between vulnerable farmers and small and medium enterprises

## Upcoming priorities

The National team is currently reflecting on and internalizing the lessons from the first year of implementation to fine-tune detailed upcoming activities. The project aims to leverage synergies with other Pacific organizations like The Pacific Community (SPC) and establish linkages with ongoing initiatives like DFAT's Market Development Facility. Year two will likely include more technical support for farmers in the form of training and increased coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock on extension services.

## Partners

- ✓ Kastom Gaden Association
- ✓ Solomon Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- ✓ Pacific Islands Farmers Organisation Network
- ✓ Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services



## Key successes in Solomon Islands

- ✓ Labour-saving tools distributed and land prepared benefitting over 4,500 farmers
- ✓ 9 germplasm centres established, multiplying varieties of more than 10 different root crops, 20 different vegetables, 5 different fruit trees, including open-pollinated seeds
- ✓ 4,900 seed packets, seedlings and planting materials distributed to farmers through 3 diversity fairs
- ✓ 135 piglets, and 882 local chickens distributed in 3 Provinces benefitting 2,739 farmers
- ✓ Hosted a hackathon event during which 31 IT specialists competed to design and develop digital solutions to link farmers to markets
- ✓ Trained more than 8,300 farmers on topics including improved farming and gardening techniques, nursery management, seedling production, soil, pest and disease management, and nutrition awareness
- ✓ Trained 240 farmers in food processing and preservation techniques to create value from surplus root crops, vegetables and fruits
- ✓ Improved processing equipment for 3 SME partners who are sourcing produce from 240 PIRAS-supported farmers

## Spotlight: Diversity Fairs bring farmer-to-farmer exchange to remote areas

PIRAS established nine community-based germplasm centres that multiply and distribute high-quality planting materials, boosting local crop genetic resources and improving resiliency and food security. These centres also provide community-wide, hands-on education to rural farmers in the form of Diversity Fairs. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) and Provincial Government, PIRAS rolled out three highly successful Diversity Fairs in two provinces. The PIRAS Fairs promote farmer-to-farmer exchange, visibility for farmers' associations, a marketplace, and information sharing through demonstrations, technical assistance, and crop showcasing. While similar to annual government-sponsored agriculture shows that usually take place in towns, the PIRAS-supported fairs were specifically designed to meet the multiple needs of rural and remote communities.

Hosting the fairs closer to where farmers live eliminated or reduced their travel costs—a significant advantage as fuel prices continue to rise. As a result, many farmers who sold produce at the fairs took home a larger share of the profits. The collaboration between PIRAS and the MAL maximized opportunities to share costs and expertise, especially beneficial in the Western Province since lack of fuel funds has limited



Woman looking at produce display at Gizo Diversity Fair, Solomon Islands.

MAL's activities there. The collaboration also increased access to important government services for rural, remote farmers. Those with sick plants could seek assistance from MAL's plant health clinics and farmers could attend to their own health concerns as well. Medical staff from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services were on hand so farmers could seek medical assistance and advice.

The fairs attracted more than 5,800 farmers, about a fifth of whom were women. Rural farmers have already requested that additional fairs following the same format be expanded and offered more frequently.

The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility (PIRAS) is supported by the Australian Government and IFAD